From: Tim
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:26am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement - BAD!

The terms of the settlement that the DOJ reached with Microsoft are BAD!

MS has proven they will not respect the spirit of any court decree, and will bend and push the letter of that decree until there are enough loopholes to let them continue with business as usual.

MS has built a huge pile of cash reserves, mostly on the back of the consumers who were the victims of the monopoly MS built. If I robbed a bank and invested the money, I wouldn't get to keep the interest when I was caught. Thus, I think extremely heavy fines are needed to show that crime does not pay. Something in the 10, 20,30 billion dollar range would do nicely.

Finally, one of the biggest impediments to anyone competing with MS is the totally hidden nature of file formats for things like Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint, Windows Media Player, etc. MS continually changes and manipulates these formats, so anyone attempting to interoperate with MS formats is always behind. Please require MS to completely and totally document *every* file format, *every* communications protocol and *every* API, and divulge to the public that documentation with no licensing requirements, and to publish changes at least 6 months in advance, so that other companies can have a chance to update their products to work with the new format. Do NOT leave any loophole that would allow MS to not disclose something for "security" reasons - if a protocol is insecure because someone knows how it works, then it's not really secure at all. Truly secure protocols are widely reviewed, and withstand public scrutiny without any problems.

As a member of the IT industry, I feel very deeply that MS's illegal tactics have harmed the industry and reduced innovation. The rise of Free Software such as Linux as the only real viable competitors to MS show how MS have poisoned the commercial software industry.

Thank you for your time,
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